# INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

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On Monday, July 27, 1998, Sergeants Anthony Ward, Rick Jennings, Clay Porlier, and Lieutenant Cecil Rhambo, of the Internal Affairs Bureau responded to Los Cerritos Courthouse to conduct a review of a use of force incident.

The summary of this incident is based on the interviews of witnesses and deputies, memorandums, and reports under file number 198-00314-4100-144.

## SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENT

Deputies were unhandcuffing inmates in the lock up area at Los Cerritos Courthouse. An altercation erupted between three inmates and deputies intervened to separate the inmates. After being separated from the other inmates, one of the inmates continued to fight with the deputies. The deputies took the inmate to the ground and struggled to get him handcuffed. The inmate did not comply with the deputies verbal commands and sustained a broken left arm while being restrained.

## INVOLVED DEPUTIES

[redacted] Deputy Sheriff, [redacted] Transportation Bureau
[redacted] Deputy Sheriff, [redacted] Transportation Bureau
DENISON, Trent, Bonus Deputy, [redacted] Industry Sheriff Station (working overtime)

## WITNESS DEPUTIES

ZEMBAL, Gregory, Deputy Sheriff, #[redacted], Court Services Bureau
CARLOS, John, Deputy Sheriff, #[redacted] Court Services Bureau
SANCHEZ, Virginia, Deputy Sheriff, #[redacted], Court Services Bureau

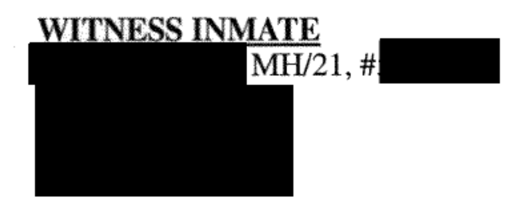
## INVOLVED INMATES

PARDENILLA, John, MP/30, #5718918
[redacted]
Housed at [redacted]

RAMIREZ, Ricardo, MH/19, #5716618
[redacted]
Housed at [redacted]

IRIBE, Victor, MH/21, #5711130
[redacted]
Housed at [redacted]

**WITNESS INMATE**



[redacted] MH/21, #[redacted]

[redacted]

**TERMINOLOGY**

**TST chain** - chain used by our Transportation Deputies when transporting prisoners. It comprises a six-foot chain with a set of handcuffs at both ends.

**Single man chain/Waist chain** - a phrase used by deputies to describe one inmate handcuffed with a TST chain.

**SUMMARY OF INCIDENT**

Deputy [redacted] said he and his partner, Deputy [redacted] were in the lock up area assisting deputies with the unhandcuffing of inmates that were being placed into holding cells. He said he was standing near the sallyport door when he heard noises that he believed was a fight. He said he looked to his left and saw two inmates on single man chains being separated by the deputies. He said that deputies had separated the two inmates when a third inmate charged one of the inmates on the single man change.

He said that deputies began yelling at the inmates to "stop fighting, face the wall, and get into their cells." [redacted] said at this time there were twenty-eight inmates in the lock up area that were unhandcuffed and unsecured. He said he and Deputy [redacted] grabbed the inmate that had charged the handcuffed inmate and ordered him to stop fighting. He said once the inmate was separated from the inmate that he attacked, he began to swing his fist at the deputies. [redacted] said he and [redacted] took the inmate down to the ground as he continued to resist their efforts to control him.

[redacted] said that other deputies arrived and began to assist him and [redacted] with controlling the inmate they had on the floor. He said he was able to gain control of the inmate's right arm and put it in a rear wrist lock behind his back. He could not see who what was happening with the inmate's left arm, but he remembers that the inmate was still resisting. He said he heard someone say, "I think his arm is broken."

He did not know who said it, but at that point the inmate stopped resisting. He said the inmate did not cry out in pain or indicate in anyway that his arm was injured. [redacted] said that someone handed him a TST chain and the inmate was handcuffed with it, to control him, but also to prevent any further injury to his arm.

[redacted] said that while fighting with the inmate on the ground he struck the inmate three times in the face area with his right fist. He added that as a result of the fight he sustained abrasions to his right forearm and left knee.

[redacted] said he did not see any other Department member strike or kick any of the inmates. He said the force he did witness was other unknown deputies restraining the other two combative inmates. He said he had his O.C. spray with him, but chose not to deploy it because he felt it also could incapacitate the deputies who were already involved with the inmates, and they were out

numbered.

Deputy [redacted] said he was in the sallyport area when he heard noises that he believed was a fight occurring inside the lock up area. He said he ran inside and saw an unhandcuffed inmate attacking a handcuffed inmate that was on a single man chain. He said he ran toward the unhandcuffed inmate, grabbed him near the neck area, and pulled him to the floor. He said he fell to the floor with the inmate and was now kneeling on the inmate´s left side. His partner, Deputy [redacted] was assisting him and was trying to gain control of the inmate´s right arm.

[redacted] said the inmate did not comply with his verbal commands to stop fighting and continued "thrashing" around. He said the inmate had stiffened his arms and he was unable to get the inmate´s left arm behind his back. He said that [redacted] had gained control of the inmate´s right arm just as assisting deputies arrived in the lock up area.

[redacted] said that Deputy Trent Denison came to his aid and had better leverage to gain control of the suspect´s left arm. He said he focused on keeping the inmate pinned down on the ground, as he continued resisting the deputies, by pushing down on the inmates head and shoulder area with his body. He saw Deputy Denison place the inmate´s left arm behind his back and the inmate continued to resist and thrash around. He said that Denison had the inmate´s arm behind his back for approximately 20-30 seconds and then he heard a "pop." He said the inmate stopped resisting and someone said the inmate´s arm was broken.

[redacted] said he did not strike the inmate, nor did he see any other Department member strike any inmates. He added that he did not know what started the fight because he was in the sallyport area and not in the lock up area when it began.

[redacted] sustained a scratch to his right wrist during the altercation. He said he had his O.C. spray but did not consider using it.

Deputy Denison said he had just arrived at Los Cerritos Courthouse when he saw deputies responding to fight in the lock up area. He said he entered the lock up area and saw two inmates fighting with deputies on the floor and several inmates standing around along the walls. Denison said he went to assist the deputies that were struggling with inmate Ramirez. Denison said he grabbed Ramirez´s left arm as other deputies were holding onto his right arm and legs. Denison said that he and another deputy were trying to get Ramirez´s left arm behind his back in a control hold as he continued to fight with the deputies.

Denison said he was kneeling next to Ramirez on the floor and as they tried to get his left arm handcuffed, he heard a loud "pop." After hearing the "pop" Ramirez stopped fighting with the deputies and they were able to get him handcuffed. He said during the incident deputies were yelling at Ramirez to stop fighting and place his hands behind his back, but Ramirez did not comply. Denison said he saw that Ramirez´s left arm was injured and that he had an abrasion above his right eye.

Denison said he was not trying to break Ramirez´s arm, but only trying to get him handcuffed. He said he did not see any deputy strike or kick any inmate during this incident. Denison said his normal work assignment is at Industry Station and that is the reason he does not know the names of the other deputies involved in this incident.

Deputy Gregory Zembal said he was in the lock up area, near the west wall, unhandcuffing inmates as they entered the lock up area. While doing this he saw inmate Victor Iribe begin to attack inmate John Pardenilla. He said both inmates were on single man chains and there was not much to they could do to each other. Zembal said he and Deputy John Carlos walked over to intervene between the two inmates. As he approached the inmates, he saw inmate Ricardo Ramirez, who was unhandcuffed, run from the east wall to the west wall and begin hitting Pardenilla.

Zembal said he grabbed Ramirez by the arm and told him to stop and step back, and Ramirez complied. Zembal said he looked around and saw the other twenty plus inmates begin to gather around him. He began yelling at all of the unhandcuffed inmates to "get back and enter the cell." He said the inmates began entering the holding cell and he walked over to lock the cell door.

As Zembal was locking down the other inmates, he said other assisting deputies arrived in the lock up area.

Zembal said he did not witness any of the altercation between Ramirez and any deputy, because he was busy locking down the other inmates. He said he did not discover that Ramirez´s arm was broken until the incident was over.

Deputy Virginia Sanchez said she was in the lock up booth when the incident began. She saw Ramirez rush from the east wall in the lock up area toward inmates that were single man chained along the west wall. She saw Deputy Zembal yell at Ramirez and push him back toward the east wall. Sanchez said she thought Ramirez was going to comply with Zembal´s orders, but he charged pass Zembal and began attacking one of the inmates.

Sanchez said she turned to broadcasted the disturbance over the radio and intercom system. When she looked out into the lock up area again she saw three deputies wrestling on the floor with two unknown inmates. She could not identify the deputies or inmates she witnessed because she was monitoring the cameras and opening the outer doors for the responding deputies.

Sanchez said she did not see any deputy strike any of the inmates and did not see how Ramirez injured his arm.

Deputy John Carlos said was working in the lock up area when the incident began. He said there were three inmates on single man chains standing along the west wall of the lock up area. He said he was assisting other deputies with the unchaining of the other inmates and heard a commotion, which he believed was a fight, occurring behind him to his left. He turned and saw Iribe kicking and elbowing Pardenilla near the west wall. He saw Deputy Zembal separating the two inmates and began to approach them to offer assistance.

Carlos said that as he approached the group he saw inmate Ramirez run from the east wall toward the group. He saw Ramirez reach over Zembal's left shoulder and strike inmate Pardenilla. Carlos said he grabbed Iribe, who was still kicking at Pardenilla and Deputy Carlos, and took him to the ground. Once on the ground, Carlos said he used his body weight to control Iribe and prevent him from kicking anyone else.

Carlos said while he was controlling Iribe, he saw Deputies Denison and [redacted] struggling with Ramirez on the ground. He said they were telling him to, "Get your hands behind your back, and

stop fighting," but he was not complying. He saw Ramirez clinch his fist and put his hands beneath his body so that the deputies could not handcuff him. Carlos said that deputies were able to get one armed handcuffed and were attempting to handcuff the other arm when he heard a "pop." After hearing the "pop" Carlos said he saw Ramirez´s body go limp and he stopped resisting.

Carlos said he did not see any deputy strike or kick any inmate.

## INVOLVED INMATE INTERVIEWS

Inmate John Pardenilla said that he was handcuffed on a single man chain and seated separately on the Sheriff´s bus. While en route to court Inmate Victor Iribe, who was also on a single man chain, asked him where he was from. He said he told Iribe that he was from Paramount. Iribe asked Pardenilla if he was Asian, and Pardenilla told him that he was Filipino.

Pardenilla said he was standing in the court lock-up area, still handcuffed, along the west wall, next to Iribe. As Inmate Ricardo Ramirez entered the lock-up area and was being unhandcuffed by the deputies, Iribe said something to Ramirez in Spanish. Pardenilla said he does not speak Spanish and did not know what Iribe said. After being unhandcuffed Ramirez walked east along the wall to enter a holding cell.

Pardenilla said that Iribe began kicking him in the leg area. Immediately after Iribe began kicking him, Ramirez ran toward him and began hitting him with his fist about his head and body. He heard the deputies yelling for them to stop fighting and for everyone to face the wall. Pardenilla said unknown deputies separated him from Iribe and Ramirez and he faced the wall.

He said he was not resisting and he was not hit or injured by any deputy personnel. He said he heard Iribe and Ramirez struggling with the deputies, but he could not see what was happening because he was facing the wall.

Pardenilla complained of pain to the back of his head and back area. He said he does not know either of the inmates that attacked him.

Inmate Ricardo Ramirez said he did not know the inmate that he had fought with in the lock-up area. He said he heard the deputies yelling for them to stop fighting and then he was separated from Pardenilla. He said he was still struggling trying to attack Pardenilla and the deputies began hitting him in the head and body area. He said he was taken down to the ground by the deputies and was told to stop resisting.

He said when he was on the ground he continued to struggle with the deputies. He changed his story and said that once he was on the ground he stopped resisting and voluntarily placed his hands behind his back so the deputies could handcuff him. He said that once the deputies got the handcuffs on he realized that his arm was injured. He does not remember how his arm got injured or which deputy placed the handcuffs on him.

He did not provide any additional information.

**IAB NOTE:** Inmate Ramirez was interviewed at the hospital and had been given some pain medication prior to the interview.

Inmate Victor Iribe said he was standing along the east wall when persons unknown to him pulled him from behind and threw him to the ground. He said he was not fighting and did not know why someone threw him to the ground.

He said while he was on the ground an unknown deputy was holding him down on the ground and had his knee pressed against his face. He said unknown deputy was standing on his left ankle. He said he was not resisting and did not know why the deputies were treating him this way. While on the ground he said he heard someone yelling, "Stop. I´m not doing anything." He said he was not hit or kicked by any deputy personnel. He said he did not see any of the altercation between Ramirez and the deputies.

Iribe said he did have a conversation with Ramirez, but that they were talking about their girlfriends. He denied asking Pardenilla any questions while they rode on the bus. Iribe complained of pain to his left ankle.

**WITNESS INMATE INTERVIEW**

Inmate [redacted] said he was standing in front of Cell "B", along the east wall, facing south. He said Iribe, Pardenilla, and an unknown inmate were all standing along the west wall of the lock-up area. He said he saw Pardenilla strike Iribe in the jaw for no apparent reason. He said Iribe was handcuffed and Pardenilla was not. He said Iribe began kicking Pardenilla to defend himself and that the deputies charged in and began hitting Iribe in the rib area.

He said he could not remember if the deputies were giving orders for them to stop fighting because he entered Cell "B." He said he did not see how Ramirez injured his arm.

> **IAB NOTE:** The remaining inmates refused to give a statement and denied seeing anything.

**MEDICAL ASSESSMENT**

Inmate Ramirez was taken to the Bellflower Medical Center for treatment. He was examined by Doctor Anna Law who said that her preliminary medical evaluation revealed that Ramirez sustained a fracture just above his left elbow and that he has an old fracture from a gunshot wound a few inches above his new fracture. She added that the X-rays show that the old fracture did not heal properly and that Ramirez´s bone structure in that area would have been weakened. She also said that the new fracture appears to have come from a "twisting motion" which is consistent with the reported force.